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## **EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION IN THE RURAL AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN WEST HALMAHERA<sup>1</sup>**

**Nindatu Peinina Ireine<sup>2</sup>**  
**Agung Sarwititi S<sup>3</sup>, Maksum<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Part of the thesis submitted to the Graduate School research seminar IPB

<sup>2</sup> IPB Graduate Students Study Program for Agricultural and Rural Development Communication

<sup>3</sup> Supervising Commission

### **Abstract**

Rural Agribusiness Development Program (PUAP) is a program of Ministry Agriculture of Republic Indonesian (RI) toward poor farmers in the village. The objectives of this research were; (1) to analyze the level of PUAP program communication effectiveness, (2) to analyze relationship between the characteristics of Gapoktan members and perception about PUAP program, (3) to analyze relationship between Gapoktan members and communication effectiveness on PUAP program, (4) to analyze relationship between the perception of Gapoktan members and communication affectivity on PUAP program and (5) to analyze relationship between communication of Gapoktan members' behavior and communication effectiveness on PUAP program. This research was designed as correlation descriptive. Seventy-one farmers were taken as sample through proportional cluster random sampling from Gapoktan members who received PUAP donation support in 2009, in two sub-districts in the West Halmahera. Data were analyzed using rank Spearman correlation. Result of the research showed that (1) the communication of PUAP Program in West Halmahera district has been done effectively, it is shown by the knowledge and actions of the Gapoktan members which are relatively moderate, especially about making the work plan, utilization and refund PUAP program, whereas group member attitudes toward the implementation of PUAP is relatively high, (2) characteristics of Gapoktan members are significantly correlated with their perceptions on PUAP Program, (3) characteristics of Gapoktan members are not significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program, (4) perceptions of Gapoktan members toward PUAP Program are significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program, and (5) Gapoktan member communication behaviors significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program.

Keywords : *characteristics of Gapoktan members, perceptions, communication behaviors, effectiveness of communication*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture has been implementing Rural Agribusiness Development Program (PUAP) since 2008. PUAP implementation aimed to reduce poverty and to create job in rural areas (Ministry of Agriculture 2008). West Halmahera, a district of North Maluku province, received PUAP Program grant. The National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) BPS Ministry of Rural Development (PDT Kemen. 2010) shows that the West Halmahera district is categorized as a poor district. The percentage of poor people is 13.31% of the total population of North Maluku province.

PUAP program has been implemented since 2008-2011 in West Halmahera district. But the program showed no significant results in accordance with PUAP purposes. One reason for this unsuccessful implementation of the PUAP program is presumably because the communication has not been done effectively. DeVito (1997) stated that communication always has the effects or impacts on one or more persons who engaged in acts of communication. The effects are; impact of intellectual (cognitive), the impact of a change in attitude (affective) and behavioral effects (psychomotor).

Research on the effectiveness of the communication has been done previously by the Agung (2001), Manjar (2002), Suwanda (2003), Rahmani (2006), and Indra (2011). The results show that there is a relationship between individual characteristics and the effectiveness of communication. Other factor related to the effectiveness of communication is perception. The research by Oktarina (2008) suggests that one factor that is closely linked to weak communication effectiveness in farmers on the institutional role of agropolitan developing is the less precise perception of the communication process among agropolitan institutions. Wahyudi (2004) through his research shows that communication behaviors significantly correlated with the level of knowledge, attitudes and actions of members of the public on forest conservation. Based on the literature review, the study on the communication effectiveness of PUAP Program in West Halmahera district needs to be assessed with the factors that were closely related as individual characteristics, perceptions and communication behaviors.

Formulation of the study are; (1) What is the level of communication effectiveness in Program PUAP for Gapoktan member? (2) What factors are significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in the Program PUAP for Gapoktan member?

Referring to the problems above, this study aims to: (1) analyze the effectiveness of communication in Gapoktan member of PUAP Program, (2) analyze the relationship between individual characteristics with their perception toward PUAP Program, (3) analyze the relationship of individual characteristics on the effectiveness of communication of PUAP Program,

(4) analyze the relationship between perception of Gapoktan members with communication effectiveness on PUAP Program, (5) Analyze the relationship of the effectiveness of the communication behavior in PUAP Program. Based on the formulation of the problem and the objectives of the research, the uses of this study are: (1) to provide input for the development of science, especially for the Communication Sciences Agricultural and Rural Development, (2) The results of this study are expected to be useful for the district government of West Halmahera in particular the Department of Agriculture, in an effort to determine policy-related work of PUAP Program, (3) Being a reference for further research related to the effectiveness of communication especially PUAP Program.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

DeVito (1997), Effendy (2001) revealed that communication always has the effect or impact on one or more persons who are engaged in acts of communication. The effect is the impact of intellectual (cognitive), the impact of a change in attitude (affective) and behavioral effects (psychomotor). Soekartawi (2005) suggests the factors of individual differences in adapting the innovation, which are: 1) age, 2) education, 3) socio-economic status, 4) the pattern of relationships (locality or cosmopolitan), 5) the courage to take risks, 6) attitudes toward social change, 7) the motivation to work, 8) aspirations, 9) fatalism 10) dogmatism. According to DeVito (1997), perception is the process by which we become aware of the many stimuli that affect our senses. Perception affects the stimulus (stimulus) or kind of message that is absorbed and the meaning that is given when a person get consciousness. Perception is the essence of communication, while interpretation is the essence of perception (Mulyana 2005). Variables of communication behavior by Roger (1983) are: exposure to interpersonal communication channels, exposure to the media and social participation, social network systems, cosmopolitan, and contacts with reformer agents, seeking information about the innovation, knowledge and opinion leadership.

Mind Framework and Hypotheses

### *Mind Framework*

Characteristic of Gapoktan Member

- Age
- Sex
- Formal Education
- Non-Formal Education
- Revenue
- Tenure
- Total area
- Experience of receiving government assistance

#### Effectiveness of Communication Program PUAP

- Knowledge of program PUAP assistance
- Attitudes towards aid PUAP program
- Measures to implement the aid program PUAP

#### Behavior Communication

- Contact with Extension Officer
- Contact with Supervisor of Mitra Tani
- Contact the Gapoktan officer
- Contact with fellow members of Gapoktan

#### Perception of Gapoktan Members Toward PUAP Aid

- Type of PUAP assistance
- Benefits of PUAP assistance
- Factors supporting PUAP aid
- The credibility of information sources of PUAP aid

### **Research Hypothesis**

The hypotheses of this study are: (1) There is a significant relationship between individual characteristics and the perception of Gapoktan members toward PUAP Program, (2) There is a significant relationship between the characteristics of individuals and communication effectiveness PUAP Program, (3) There is a significant relationship between perceptions of Gapoktan members and the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program, (4) There is a significant relationship between the behavior of the communication with the communication effectiveness of PUAP Program.

## **METHODS**

### **Location and Time of Research**

Study site was chosen purposively at the Sahu East Sub-district and Ibu Sub-district, West Halmahera District, North Maluku Province. Selection of study sites based on the consideration that the East Sahu Sub-district and Ibu Sub-district are two PUAP Program grantees in 2009. The research was conducted in May-June 2012.

### **Research Design**

The study was designed as a co-relational descriptive study. The variables observed in this study consist of independent variables (individual characteristics, perceptions of Gapoktan members, communication behaviors, and variables attached effectively of communication).

### **Population and Sample**

The population is farmers who beneficiaries PUAP Program, coordinated in Gapoktan PUAP Program grantees in West Halmahera district in 2009 particularly as many as 160 members Gapoktan. Sampling was conducted in proportional cluster random sampling using sampling fractions 44.5% of Gapoktan members, so that the sample studied as much as 71 farmers.

### **Validity and Reliability**

The Pearson product moment technique is used to test the validity in 17 respondents. We obtained the critical value of 0.482 which means that the value statement grains below a critical value is invalid then discarded. The value that is not too far below the critical value, we corrected the grammar to be more understood by the respondent. Cronbach alpha technique is used to test the reliability of the instrument to obtain the coefficient values in the range of 0.726 to 0.927 so that the instruments are reliable and can be used.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected by interview, referring to the instrument that has been valid and reliable, and field observation methods. Data is analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, average and total scores) and inferential which is the Spearman rank correlation test (Microsoft Excel program and SPSS version 20.0).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Description of Gapoktan Characteristic**

Most of the age class of Gapoktan members are young people, mostly consisted of men. Women's involvement in the implementation of the PUAP program is still minimal. Formal education levels of responders are low (SD/Elementary School) and only a small portion of the group members who attend non-formal education such as training held by the local Department of Agriculture. Most farmers still have low incomes range from IDR 620,000 to IDR 1,763,300 per month. Their land status is their own property with total area ranging from 0.2 -> 4.8 Ha. The area is widely used for the cultivation of annual crops. A total of 85.92% of existed farmers are members of farmer groups. Besides PUAP Program, farmers are also receive other kind of other government assistance, such as rice for poor people from Department of Social and support production facilities from Department of Agriculture of West Halmahera. The type of government assistance is different from the grant of PUAP Program. There are 52.11% of the respondents who had experience of receiving government assistance during the last three years when the study was conducted (Table 1).

**Table 1 Characteristics of Gapoktan members granted PUAP program**

Characteristics of Gapoktan members	Classification	Number (Person)	Percentage (%)
Age	Young (< 43year)	29	40.85
	Medium (43-59 year)	28	39.43
	Old (> 59 year)	14	19.72
Sex	Men	51	71.83
	Women	20	28.17
Formal Education	Low (SD)	27	38.02
	Medium (SMP)	22	30.99
	High (SMA)	22	30.99
Non-formal Education	Low (Never-1 time)	63	88.73
	Medium (2-3 times)	3	4.23
	High (4 times)	5	7.04
Family income	Low (< IDR1,763,300)	47	66.20
	Medium (IDR1,763,300- IDR 2,906,600)	20	28.16
	High (> IDR 2,906,600)	4	5.64
Land Ownership	Own tenure	70	98.59
	Other tenure	1	1.41
Area	Small (< 2.5 Ha)	52	73.24
	Medium (2.6-4.8 Ha)	16	22.54
	Large (> 4. 8 Ha)	3	4.22
Status in the group	Organizer	10	14.08
	Member	61	85.92
Experience in receiving the government aid	Low (Never-1 year)	30	42.26
	Medium (2 year)	4	5.63
	High (3 year)	37	52.11

*Note: n: 71*

### **Perceptions of Gapoktan Member toward Program PUAP Assistance**

Perception of Gapoktan members toward the types and benefits of PUAP assistance program is relatively moderate (Table 2). It shows that the respondents' assessment of the types and benefits of PUAP assistance program is relatively moderate. Respondents simply know but do not understand about the PUAP programs. They know that PUAP is government assistance, kind of rolling or grants, but they are still confused. They assess that PUAP program has benefited them, such as the provision of the production facilities, capital, consumption and education.

Farmers' perceptions toward the availability of supporting factors and credibility of PUAP Program information sources are still low. Availability of supporting factors (market, production facilities, transportation facilities, roads) is not enough to support farming activities and public relations, both in the East Sahu Sub-district and Ibu Sub-district. There are sections of the road making that are difficult to pass, the availability of transportation is still minimal and shop or production facilities providers are not available in the local village. Perception respondents to the credibility of sources of information (companion extension and PMT) are included in the range of low scores. It shows that the respondents have not been able to trust the ability of companion extension and PMT as a source of information in PUAP Program. The reason of the low scores is minimal frequency of visits from companion extension and PMT to the member of Gapoktan.

**Table 2 Mean scores of Gapoktan member perception who granted the PUAP**

Perception of Gapoktan member	Mean Score*)
Type of PUAP assistance program	2,00
Benefit of PUAP assistance Program	2,11
Supported factors of PUAP Assistance Program	1,42
Credibility of Information Sources of PUAP assistance Program	1,56
<b>Total Mean Score</b>	<b>1,77</b>

*Note: \*) lower score range (1 to 1.66), medium (1.67 to .33), high (2.34 to 3.00)*

### **Communication Behavior of Gapoktan Members on PUAP Program**

Mean total scores of communication behavior were classified as moderate (2.12), meaning that the communication between farmers and extension companion, PUAP organizer and Gapoktan member is relatively fine. The contact with the PMT has a low average score. This is because the frequency of PMT visits to Gapoktan is only once a month. PMT officers only meet with the organizer alone (according to the work program PMT). Additionally, only one PMT person is assigned for one fiscal year per district. According to PMT PUAP Program of West Halmahera district in 2009, the officer has not been able to reach a maximum working area for a fairly extreme geographical conditions and inadequate highway facilities. Farmers make contact more with the organizer and other members of Gapoktan than with a companion extension and PMT. Mean scores on both the communication behavior is high, respectively (Table 3).

**Table 3 Mean scores of communication behaviors of Gapoktan member**

Communication behavior of Gapoktan members	Mean Score*)
Contact with extension officer	1,94
Contact with PMT	1,48
Contact with organizer	2,52
Contact with other members	2,53
Total Mean score	2,12

*Note: \*) lower score range (1 to 1.66), medium (1.67 to 2.33), high (2.34 to 3.00)*

The reason of the high average scores is because the farmers are more confident, comfortable and free to talk with the organizer and other Gapoktan members. In addition, when the respondents want to consult about farm, the nearest source of information that can be found is the executive Gapoktan.

#### **Communication Effectiveness Program PUAP**

Table 4 shows that the effectiveness of the communication of group members on aspects of knowledge and action is moderate, whereas in the aspect of attitude is relatively high with the average score of 4.00. It is clear that respondents have a positive attitude towards PUAP Program in West Halmahera district, while the aspects of knowledge and action are still moderate. There are farmers who do not know exactly about the PUAP aid programs. The knowledge is superficial. Farmers also do not well-perform productive farms or businesses with a PUAP grant. Lack of knowledge and understanding of the farmers are due to the lack of co-visit frequency extension and low participation of respondents in extension meetings with officials and Gapoktan members.

**Table 4 Mean scores of communication effectiveness of Gapoktan member as PUAP programs grantee**

Communication effectiveness Gapoktan members	Average Score
Knowledge toward PUAP program	2,02*)
Attitudes towards PUAP program	4,00**)
Action to implement PUAP Program	2,01*)

*Note: \*) lower score range (1 to 1.66), medium (1.67 to 2.33), high (2.34 to 3.00)*

*\*\*\*) Lower score range (1 to 2.33), medium (2.34 to 3.67), high (3.68 to 5.00)*

Mean scores for the aspects of the action are moderate (2.01). It means the act of the respondents involved in the implementation of the PUAP program was classified as moderate. This is due to lack of knowledge and understanding of the respondents' PUAP Program, thus caused errors in their perception of types of assistance programs as a rolling type. In addition, the involvement of the respondent as members of Gapoktan PUAP Program grantee was done after they were registered as a member of a group or combination of groups of farmer beneficiaries. Other reason that did not lead to maximum execution of PUAP program is that the members already have a fixed source of income prior to PUAP program, which can support the economic life of the family.

### **Characteristic of Relationship of Gapoktan members with Their Perception on PUAP Program**

Age significantly has negative correlation with the credibility of information sources of PUAP program (Table 5). This suggests that the more mature or older the respondents the more tendency to reduce the perception of the credibility of information sources of PUAP Program. The less visits intensity by PMT extension, the less monitoring and less evaluation have been experienced by the respondents as the age older. Sex is significantly correlated with supporting factors of PUAP Program. This means that gender difference will lead to difference in perception of the supporting factors of PUAP program. Men are more involved in the implementation of the Program PUAP than women. Non-formal education is significantly correlated with the perception toward the type of PUAP Program aid.

Experience of receiving other government aid has significantly negative correlation with perceptions of the type and supporting factors of PUAP program, which means that member with more experiences of receiving government aids will show decrease perception tendency toward the types and supporting factors of PUAP program. It might be because the previous government aid they received was grant type, in contrast to PUAP Program which is rolling system aid. Status in the group has significantly negative correlation with PUAP program supporting factors.

**Table 5 Relationship characteristics of Gapoktan members with the perception toward the PUAP program**

Characteristic of Gapoktan member	The Perception of Gapoktan Member			
	Aid Type	Aid Benefit	Support factor	Credibility of Information sources
Age	-1,101	0,004	-0,201	-0,270*
Sex	0,088	0,121	0,289*	0,130
Formal Education	0,199	0,155	-0,004	0,080
Non-formal Education	0,271*	0,159	-0,205	0,043
Income	-0,051	0,150	-0,096	-0,182
Land Ownership Status	-0,003	-0,139	0,083	-0,117
Area	-0,174	-0,030	-0,163	-0,045
Experience receiving other aid	-0,253*	-0,105	-0,247*	0,107
Status in Group	0,076	0,037	-0,256*	0,023

*Note: \* significantly correlated at  $p < 0.05$  and \*\* highly significant associated at  $p < 0.01$*

**Characteristic relationship between Gapoktan member and Communications Effectiveness of PUAP Program**

**Table 6 The Relationship between characteristics of Gapoktan members with the effectiveness of the communication of PUAP program**

Characteristic of Gapoktan member	Communication Effectiveness		
	Knowledge	Attitude	Action
Age	-0,231	-0,136	0,035
Sex	0,197	0,149	0,054
Formal Education	0,101	0,033	-0,159
Non-formal education	0,110	0,145	0,097
Income	0,014	-0,098	0,091
Land Ownership	-0,089	-0,093	0,129
Total Area	0,058	-0,062	-0,131
Experience receiving other program	0,015	0,065	-0,136
Status in Group	0,187	-0,009	0,040

*Description: Do not significantly correlated at  $p < 0.05$*

Characteristics of Gapoktan members are not significantly associated with communication effectiveness of PUAP program on aspects of knowledge, attitudes and actions. In other words, effective communication depends not only on the characteristics of the seven members of the group. Table 6 shows that the overall individual characteristics are not significantly correlated with the effectiveness of the communication of knowledge, attitudes and actions aspects.

### **The Relationships between Perceptions of Gapoktan members and Communication Effectiveness of PUAP Program**

Perception of Gapoktan members toward the types of PUAP assistance programs is significantly correlated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and attitudes. It is clear that higher the perception level of group members toward the type of assistance as revolving PUAP program from the government will likely increase the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and attitudes. The accuracy of farmers' perceptions toward the PUAP programs assistance as rolling type will help increase knowledge and positive attitude in the implementation of the Program PUAP. A positive attitude, for example, the respondent shall refund on time and are keen to be involved in various activities held by PUAP Program. Respondents' perception about the benefits of PUAP assistance program is related to the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and is significantly correlated with the attitude aspect. Farmers recognize that the benefits of PUAP program through accepting cash and the production facilitation. There is a relationship between respondents' perception toward the credibility of information sources of PUAP and the effectiveness of the communication program on knowledge and attitude aspects. This means that the higher the respondent's perception of the credibility of sources of information (instructor companion and PMT) the more likely the effectiveness of communication increase in the aspects of knowledge and attitudes (Table 6). Respondents will receive a lot of technical information about the cultivation, manufacturing plans, mentoring and coaching from the instructor companion, while the PMT will help farmers to verify the initial business plan, bookkeeping and other administrative documents, doing the monitoring and evaluation on the usage and management of PUAP funds. The results of this study supported previous research by Nugraha (2012) which showed that the perception of youth towards agriculture in the future significantly correlated with the attitude of the youth towards employment in agriculture. Perceptions of respondents do not have a relationship with the effectiveness of the communication on the action aspect. This gives a clear picture that in West Halmahera District; PUAP program execution has not been done successfully in line with expectations and goals.

**Table 7 Relationships perception Gapoktan members with the effectiveness of communication**

Perception of Gapoktan member	Communication Effectiveness		
	Knowledge	Attitude	Action
Type of PUAP Program aid	0,275*	0,235*	-0,009
Benefit of PUAP Program aid	0,439**	0,290*	-0,029
Supporting Factors of PUAP Program	0,128	0,072	0,224
Credibility of Information sources of PUAP	0,624**	0,305**	0,117

*Note: \* significantly correlated at  $p < 0.05$  and \*\* highly significant associated at  $p < 0.01$*

### **The Relationships between Communication Behavior and Communication Effectiveness of PUAP Program**

Communication of Gapoktan members with the instructor companion is significantly correlated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and action (Table 8). This means that the more intensive the communication with counselors accompanying the respondents, the more increase the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and action in PUAP Program. This is because the respondents communicate with counselor companion more likely about things related to the implementation of PUAP, the way of cultivation and plant pest prevention and proper use of the production facilities. Communication behavior will increase the knowledge of farmers to productively develop their farming.

Contact with PMT shows a very significant relationship ( $p < 0.01$ ) with the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and action. It means that the more intensive the communication Gapoktan members with PMT, the more the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and action. Communication is focused mainly on the examination of accounting (financial) and monitoring the progress of the group members, so that the intensity of communication performed by PMT will increase knowledge and action of Gapoktan administrators to manage finances correctly.

**Table 8 Relationship between communication behaviors with communication effectiveness**

Communication Behaviors	Communication Effectiveness		
	Knowledge	Attitude	Action
Contact with companion extension	0,288*	0,223	0,247*
Contact with PMT	0,334**	0,174	0,314**
Contact with organizer	0,527**	0,256*	-0,016
Contact among members	0,331**	0,197	-0,073

*Note: \* significantly correlated at  $p < 0.05$  and \*\* highly significant associated at  $p < 0.01$*

Communication of member with organizer is highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) with the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and is clearly related on aspects of attitude. It means that the intensive communications initiated by the Gapoktan organizer will increase the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge and attitudes but not on the action. Besides companion extension and PMT, another source of information of PUAP Program is the Gapoktan organizer. According to the Ministry of Agriculture (2008), Gapoktan is a farmer institutional that implement PUAP to distribute capital assistance for members.

Contact among Gapoktan members is highly associated with communication effectiveness on aspects of knowledge only. It can be explained that the more intensive communication that occurs among members Gapoktan, the more increase the effectiveness of communication in the aspects of knowledge, whereas it is not significantly correlated to the aspect of attitude and action. The reason is that Gapoktan members rarely communicate with each other about PUAP Program. The results of this study supported previous research by Wahyudi (2004) which showed that the communication behaviors significantly correlated with the level of knowledge and attitudes of community members towards forest conservation.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

- a) Communication on PUAP Program in West Halmahera district has been going effectively, it is shown by the knowledge and actions of the members that are in moderate level especially about creating work plans, utilization and refund PUAP, while attitudes towards the implementation of the program group union members PUAP is high.

- b) Characteristics members Gapoktan significantly correlated with their perceptions toward the PUAP program, particularly age significantly correlated with the credibility of information sources, gender, experience of receiving government assistance, their status in the group significantly correlated with factors supporting; non-formal education and experience related to government aid correlated significantly with the type of PUAP Program aid.
- c) Characteristics of Gapoktan members do not significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program.
- d) Perception of Gapoktan members toward PUAP Program significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program, particularly the perception of Gapoktan members about the types, benefits and factors supporting of PUAP programs aid were significantly correlated with the aspects of knowledge and attitudes, but not significantly correlated with aspects of the action.
- e) Communication behavior Gapoktan members significantly correlated with the effectiveness of communication in PUAP Program, especially in contact with a companion extension, contact with PMT, contact the board Gapoktan and contact with fellow members Gapoktan associated with the very real and tangible aspects of knowledge, contacts with administrators Gapoktan significantly correlated with aspects of attitudes and contact with extension agents and contact with the PMT companion associated with the very real aspect of the action.

### **Suggestions**

- a) Increasing knowledge and action of Gapoktan members about making work plan, utilization and refund PUAP Program through regular meetings with companion extension and PMT
- b) Increasing the number of personnel and the frequency of visits of companion extension and PMT to each Gapoktan in order to provide good guidance

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